



United States Department of the Interior

BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

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Instruction Memorandum No. **CA-2003-011**

Expires: 09/30/04

To: All California Employees
From: State Director
Subject: Fatigue Driving and Work Hours Policy

Accident statistics for the BLM show that over the past 10 years, more than half of the fatalities within our organization have been caused by fatigue and/or distance driving. This IM reiterates BLM policy related to driving and required rest periods.

The BLM Manual Handbook, 1112-2, limits driving time to 8 hours behind the wheel in a 16-hour duty day. The duty period includes rest and meal breaks. The handbook also requires that employees have 8 hours of rest before a duty day that requires driving. Emergency driving for fires is addressed in BLM Manual 9210.5. Driving limitations for heavy equipment operators are covered by Department of Transportation in 49 CFR 395.

California BLM employees who must drive for more than 8 hours in one duty period for field duty or assignments outside of their local commuting area must plan to do one of the following:

1. remain overnight at their temporary duty location;
2. ensure there is a provision for a relief driver; or
3. obtain their supervisor's authorization to exceed this limit.

Supervisors must be aware that authorizing overtime or compensatory time, depending on the employee's status (when solo distance driving is approved), is mandatory. It's important to note that the costs associated with one vehicle accident would generally exceed the costs associated with an extra day of per diem or the inclusion of a relief driver.

Finally, no employee will be permitted to work more than 16 hours in a 24-hour period to include the maximum 8-hour driving restriction. This will also allow for the 8-hour rest requirement before driving the next day. Any variance from this policy must be approved in writing by the respective Field Manager or Deputy State Director. Supervisors are expected to ensure compliance.

I am committed to ensuring the safety of each individual in this organization. To that end, it is the responsibility of all of us to recognize the potential ramifications of driving while fatigued, overworked or pushing beyond established work periods. As we improve awareness of the problems of fatigue and/or distance driving, I am convinced we will reduce the risk of injury to our employees.

Signed by:
Mike Pool
State Director

Authenticated by:
Richard A. Erickson
Records Management

Attachment: "Our wake-up Call" (1 pg.)

Our “Wake-Up Call”

What Contributes to Driver Fatigue?

There may be many outside influences that contribute to sleepy or fatigued driving:

1. long, monotonous drives;
2. driving in rural areas with darkness all around;
3. lulling vibrations from the road or your vehicle
4. highway hypnosis;
5. new vehicles that are designed to be quieter, smoother, and easier to operate; and
6. isolation from outside stimulus, etc.

What are *WARNING SIGNS* that Tell Drivers They Are Too Tired to Drive?

- Difficulty focusing or keeping your eyes open
- Eyes beginning to burn
- Trouble keeping your head up
- Can't stop yawning
- Inattention, daydreaming
- Muscular tension, restlessness, or inability to get comfortable
- Increase in driving errors; i.e., tailgating, missing traffic signs, can't remember driving the last several miles
- Memory loss or inability to recall the location(s) or distances driven.

What Should Drivers Do if They Notice these Symptoms?

To avoid falling asleep at the wheel, you should pull off the road for a break or nap if you experience any of these warning signs. If you are at a roadside rest area, you should exit your vehicle, take a brief walk and do some easy stretching exercises.

Don't rely on coffee or a caffeine drink to keep you awake. Studies show that the feeling of alertness from caffeine is short-lived, usually as little as 45 minutes.

How to Avoid Driving While Fatigued

- Get a minimum of 8-hours of sleep the night before driving.
- Don't be afraid to stop along the way and stay overnight
- Avoid driving straight through to your destination.
- Take a break every 2 hours, or 100 miles. Stop sooner if you feel tired. On your breaks, get out and stretch; take a short walk. If feeling tired, take a brief nap for 20-30 minutes.
- Don't allow yourself to become too comfortable while driving. Turn off the cruise control and drive with the window open.
- Whenever long distances or late hours are involved, consider traveling with a relief driver.